GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

Brian P. Kemp, Governor **Frank W. Berry, Commissioner**

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TO: Home and Community Based Service (HCBS) Providers
FROM: Service Delivery and Administration Office
DATE: Thursday, March 12, 2020

RE: COVID-19 response and HCBS Operations

The health and well-being of the Department of Community Health's (DCH) members, their families and its providers are of paramount importance. The following is specific guidance related to the daily operations of Home and Community Based Service providers including work performed under the Money Follows the Person grant during the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) period. Whereas, CMS guidance gives focus to management of those individuals with COVID-19 and mitigating potential risks through contact, within healthcare facilities and patients under home isolation; this guidance will discuss ongoing work performed within member's homes, Home Delivered Meals, Adult Day Health facilities and screening/assessments within nursing facilities.

As stated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, limited information is available to characterize the spectrum of clinical illness, transmission efficiency, and the duration of viral shedding for patients with novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). This guidance is based on available information about COVID-19 and what is known about similar diseases caused by related coronaviruses (MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV). This guidance is subject to change as additional information becomes available.

Healthcare providers who suspect COVID-19 infection in a patient should report them immediately to DPH by calling 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584) and ask for a Medical Epidemiologist.

Intake and Screening of Nursing Home Residents

Per the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Nursing Home Facilities have been asked to ***actively screen*** *and* ***restrict*** visitation *by those who meet the following criteria*:

1. Signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat.
2. In the last 14 days, has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, or under investigation for COVID-19, or are ill with respiratory illness.
3. International travel within the last 14 days to countries with sustained community transmission. For updated information on affected countries visit: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html
4. Residing in a community where community-based spread of COVID-19 is occurring.

For those individuals that do not meet the above criteria, facilities may allow entry but may require visitors to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as facemasks.

DCH further recommends that these visits be restricted and if possible, to use telephonic means to communicate with members.

For Money Follows the Person program participants- Option Counselors and Transition Coordinators should not visit the nursing facilities unless there is a confirmed date for a member to transition back into the community and they (TC) are engaged in that work. All other contact regarding general information and program enrollment can be completed telephonically with signatures being obtained via fax or upon safe clearance to enter the facility.

Case Management Agencies

Home Visits- Until further notice, Case Managers may continue to use telephonic means by which to perform monthly client contact. Documentation must occur in formal notes, note type should equal "monthly client contact" as well as in the assessment tab, monthly contact assessment type.

Please Note- For CCSP in Harmony, please perform your calls using the attached document, upload it to the case note that you will also create for the call. Update the service order and demographics with changes that may occur vs. putting them on this assigned document re service changes and family member changes. PLEASE create a shell 'monthly contact assessment' with dates only for tickler purposes to remain in compliance

Private Homecare

The Personal Support Service (PSS) provider is to assure that aides **provide services as scheduled.** PSS providers are instructed to provide staff with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and to follow CDCs prevention steps as you work with members.

During your visit if you notice any signs or possible symptoms staff should immediately implement recommended infection prevention and control practices. If a member is suspected of having COVID-19. They should also notify infection control personnel at their agency and the state or local health department if a member is classified as a PUI for COVID-19.

Home Delivered Meals

For the next thirty (30) days or until 4/12/2020 HDMs may forego physical signature of meal delivery in order to reduce the exposure risk of this high-risk population. The waiver of physical signature is authorized under the following requirements:

1. HDM must maintain documentation of delivery. Electronic delivery documentation is acceptable from a known carrier, e.g. Federal Express, UPS or the U.S. Postal Service.
2. HDM must maintain documentation of receipt by the Medicaid member. This can be accomplished through phoning the member and/or next of kin either on the day of delivery or the day following delivery to verify receipt. The member's case manager may also serve as a verifying source.
3. Alternatively, the deliverer may document confirmation that the member or other person in the household was aware of the delivery through sight or verbal confirmation. This must be documented by the carrier.
4. If accomplished by phone, documentation of meal receipt must include date, time and the verifying person's name and relationship.

Adult Day Health Facilities

The state will leave the decision to remain open and/or to utilize services to the providers, members and family members. Please monitor members for possible symptoms and notify the DPH of any concerns. If the Governor or the President declares a State of Emergency, DCH will notify ADH providers to cease operations for the instructed period of time.
All other providers please use best professional judgement if you are required to visit a member's home.

Providers are encouraged to use if applicable, telephonic and/or electronic visual tools to remain in contact with members.

DCH will provide up to date information as it is received via Banner Messages on the GAMMIS provider portal and through the DCH website.

Please note that the Department of Public Health is the lead agency for any information for Infection control for general reference and guidance. https://dph.georgia.gov/

~End~